LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

R iverside has long been the Inland Empire's one true "big city." Riverside brims with a bounty of natural, cultural and historic assets: a temperate climate, a compact and diverse downtown, orange groves and other tangible links to the City's agricultural past, unblemished hillsides, cooling trees and water and institutions of higher learning, including a University of California campus. These and other features give Riverside an identity and soul distinct from the relatively undifferentiated Southern California urban landscape.

In spite of Riverside's many unique features and its strong sense of identity, the City once seemed to be known more for what it was near than for what it contained. To some 1960s-era boosters, location was Riverside's trump card. *Riverside! Just one-hour's drive from skiing or hiking in forested mountains, splashing in the surf of Orange and Los Angeles County beaches, soaking up the sun in the Palm Springs, or taking in the cultural amenities of the big cities to the west!*

Riverside's location has been an asset but also a challenge to the City's development. The City – especially its western portions – has become an attractive housing market primarily for its affordable offerings of jobs-rich cities in Orange and Los Angeles counties. Throughout the last decades of the twentieth century, Riverside's residential growth far outpaced its job growth. Without opportunities for comparably paying jobs within the City limits, Riversiders continued to join a daily exodus of morning traffic headed west on the 91 Freeway and State Route 60, with reverse patterns in the afternoon. Although many of the City's major assets remained intact, one could sense the looming potential for Riverside to become an oversized, edgeless suburb indistinguishable from the blur of much of the rest of Southern California.

A NEW VISION DEVELOPS

Growth has been a constant in Riverside's recent history. In the late 1990s and early years of the new millennium, demographers and economists projected that the entire Inland Empire region, including Riverside, would continue to grow at an astounding rate. Many Riversiders sensed that the City faced choices. Would residential growth continue to sprawl at and over the City's undeveloped edges, leading to increased demands on freeways and already strained infrastructure and services, or could the City plan for sensible, managed "smarter" growth? Would job growth continue to languish relative to
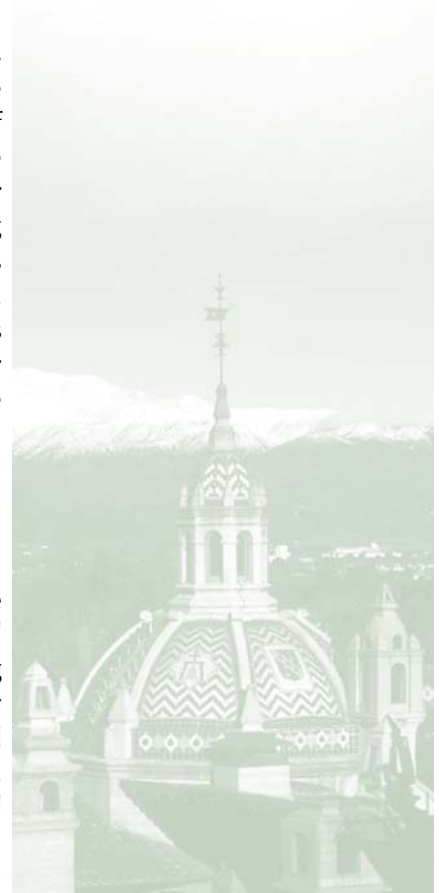
residential growth, or could new businesses be encouraged to locate in a city with an educated, skilled workforce? Would the City's identifying features such as its agricultural areas, hillsides, arroyos and historic features, give way under pressure for more residential development, or were City residents well prepared to protect important natural features and beautiful buildings that defined Riverside's heritage?

Riversiders of all ages participated in Visioning Riverside, a comprehensive effort to envision many aspects of the City's future.

Faced with these and other critical planning challenges, Riversiders embarked upon a visioning process toward a positive future, a vision of a vital and self-contained City that builds upon its strengths rather than lets them erode. This vision calls for a future that focuses new growth along well-established, in-town travel corridors rather than on "paper" streets at the urban fringe. This vision celebrates and enhances Riverside's signature agricultural, hillside, historic and recreational assets. Perhaps most importantly, this vision calls for the development and growth of prospering employment centers that offer City residents a chance to hang up their "road warrior" hats and work closer to home. *Visioning Riverside*, the end product of the visioning process completed in 2002, crystallizes these concepts in an elegant and easy to understand way.

Throughout its history, Riverside has offered lifestyle choices, catering to many different needs and desires. Residents could live in an urban neighborhood within a short distance of stores and services needed everyday, or families could opt for suburban neighborhoods with traditional amenities. Riverside also has communities like Downtown, Arlington and the Eastside, with a full complement of urban land uses. In the Arlington Heights and La Sierra Acres neighborhoods, Riversiders experience agricultural and semi-rural residential living environments set amidst orange groves and rolling hills. Other communities are primarily residential.

These choices remain available in the new vision for Riverside. What will specific areas of the City look like as Riverside moves through the first few decades of the twenty-first century?

Downtown Riverside has been rediscovered both by businesses dependent upon its central location as well as new residents who enjoy safe and convenient living within steps of vibrant shops, restaurants and services. Both residents and businesses occupy Downtown's rich store of historic buildings and new buildings respect the City's architectural heritage.

University Avenue is no longer just a road that links Downtown Riverside and the University of California, Riverside, but has evolved into a destination in its own right. New mixed-use developments line

University Avenue, catering to both the Eastside neighborhood and the growing UCR community.

The Magnolia Avenue/Market Street corridor, historically the backbone of the City's street network, has been restored to a richly landscaped, multi-functional corridor with urban villages revitalized by mixed-use development, as well as an improved bus rapid transit system that provides a truly viable alternative to automotive travel.

Riverside's dedicated business areas, like **Hunter Business Park** and **the Sycamore Canyon Business Park**, have capitalized upon connections with local colleges and universities to support clean industrial/research and development firms employing local and regional residents in high wage positions. Firms once located in Orange and Los Angeles Counties have relocated to Riverside to be closer to their employees. Warehousing, once a cornerstone of the local economy, is still important but has given way to more diverse, jobs-rich industries.

A foundation of the City's vision is the preservation of its strong network of **neighborhoods**. Residents take more pride than ever in their neighborhoods. The identity of each neighborhood is clearly evident even to the casual visitor through tailored signage, street trees and other urban design features. Libraries, police and fire stations and parks are easily available to all residents; many new public facilities have been created through agreements with school districts, colleges and universities.

For all the development anticipated in the City's future, great care has been taken to preserve the natural and agricultural assets that make up Riverside's soul. All of Riverside's natural features are linked to one another and, more critically, to Riverside's neighborhoods, by a citywide network of parkways and trails. Identifying signs and paths connect Riverside's neighborhoods with the greenbelt, the Santa Ana River, Box Springs Mountain and other natural assets. Pride in neighborhoods extends to pride in the City's diverse natural environment.

The greenbelt area of Arlington Heights is greener than ever through preservation of citrus groves and more sensitive development patterns. Riverside's hillsides and arroyos are not merely pleasing to the eye, but also continue to serve important functions in the community's overall ecosystem. The City's connection to the Santa Ana River has been enhanced with carefully planned recreational areas along the River's edge, highlighting the River's natural quality.

In the vision for the City's future, Riverside has matured, taking its rightful place among California's great cities, all the while retaining and enhancing its signature attractive characteristics.

This vision of the future will not and cannot occur without a clear plan of action. This Land Use and Urban Design Element sets the corner-stone of the General Plan and the Riverside of tomorrow articulated in the City's vision (Visioning Riverside: A Report from the Community).

SCOPE OF THIS ELEMENT

To realize Riverside's vision for its future, development and growth within the City and the greater planning area that extends into the City's Sphere of Influence (Figure LU-1, Planning Area Map) will be guided and managed by clear objectives and policies consistent with the vision. These objectives and policies set the framework for this Element. These will be implemented through a variety of planning tools to be adopted separately and refreshed periodically through the twenty-year horizon of the General Plan.

This Land Use and Urban Design Element describes present and planned land uses and their relationship to Riverside's visionary goals. The element consists of text, maps and diagrams that outline the future land uses within the City and how these uses are integrated with the other General Plan elements, objectives and policies. In addition to constituting an action plan for implementation of Riverside's vision, this Element complies with all requirements for General Plan Land Use Elements set forth in California Law.[1]

Given that this element sets forth objectives and policies for land development and usage, this element must have strong relationships to other General Plan elements. Relationships to other General Plan elements, as well as to other City, County and regional policies are in the Introduction to the General Plan.

[1]California Government Code, §65302(a).

Figure LU-1 - Planning Area

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DEFINING RIVERSIDE

RIVERSIDE'S URBAN DESIGN CONTEXT

The character of great cities rests upon interrelationships between the natural and human-made environments. The urban design framework set forth here provides for stronger relationships between Riverside's natural and built environments and establishes a conceptual framework for the Land Use and Urban Design Element.

Riverside's neighborhoods are the fundamental building blocks of the community. With only a few exceptions, all of Riverside's neighborhoods include areas for living, working, education and cultural activities.

Although Riversiders take pride in their City as a whole, personal attachments to neighborhoods are very evident. Each neighborhood has a distinct character, which this General Plan strengthens. This section of the Land Use and Urban Design Element identifies the definitive relationships between neighborhoods and their unique natural and built settings. Figure LU-2 illustrates the urban design framework that establishes these relationships and defines a city-wide context for planning.

RIVERSIDE'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Near great mountains and vast desert areas, yet not far from the ocean, Riverside occupies a unique natural environment, consisting of many physically and visually connected elements. The Urban Design Framework proposes that these connected elements be thought of holistically as Riverside Park, a citywide park open to all. Riverside Park provides places to find the peace and harmony of nature within or on the edges of the City's urban fabric. Riverside Park offers opportunities to be simultaneously within an urban environment while experiencing the cooling, shading effects of landscaped spaces.

The major components of Riverside Park are illustrated in Figure LU-23 (Riverside Park) and include the following features.

MAJOR PARKS

Riverside hosts a diverse array of parks, ranging from the wild environs of Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park to the more classic urban formality of White Park. Most of the City's park area falls somewhere on a continuum between these two archetypes, offering opportunities

The Parks and Recreation Element, as well as the Open Space and Conservation Element, provides additional information about the City's park and open space resources.

for everything from quiet contemplation of nature to sports and picnic facilities.

Figure LU-2: Riverside Park

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Figure LU-3 - Urban Design Framework

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"RIVER'S SIDE"

The "River's Side" is comprised of the Santa Ana River watercourse and riverbed, extending along the City's northern edge. River's Side connects the City to the Santa Ana's source in the San Bernardino Mountains and its outlet in the Pacific Ocean. The River's Side is a place of natural beauty offering distant vistas and close-up textures. It is a place of significant natural habitat for many species of birds and other animals. A key objective of this General Plan program is to reopen the River to the City, improving access while also improving the River's natural qualities.

MAJOR HILLS

The City's higher elevation major hills shape the visual outline and drainage area. These hills — the La Sierra Hills, Mt. Rubidoux, Box Springs Mountain, Sycamore Canyon and the many smaller ranges south of the City — collectively form a stunning visual backdrop to Riverside as viewed from its streets, buildings and open spaces. On crisp winter days, from a distance you can almost touch the rough textures of the rocky outcroppings.

See this Element under "Citywide Objectives: Protecting Riverside's Natural Environment – Hillsides" and the Open Space and Conservation Element under "Overarching Objectives" for additional information on hillsides.

*In particular, review Objectives LU-3, LU-4 and OS-2.*

Tucked within the City are many local hills. Nearly every neighborhood in Riverside features some areas of local hills, from southern Arlanza to Hawarden Ridge. These too create intimate, pleasing vistas from many of Riverside's neighborhoods, its local streets and even residents' back yards.

ARROYOS

Arroyos are the natural drainage courses that carry water from the hills either north to the Santa Ana River or across the great alluvial plain on which most of the City is situated. Some of the major arroyos passing through the City include the Tequesquite, the Prenda and Alessandro. The arroyos' intermittent patterns of wetness and dryness host a variety of animals and plant life, making them valuable wildlife corridors. Geologically speaking, the arroyos helped create Riverside, carrying water and sediment down from the mountains, creating soil conditions that were beneficial to the development of the historic Citrus Belt that once ran unbroken from Riverside to Pasadena.

See the Open Space and Conservation Element under "Our Arroyos and Biological Resources" for more information on arroyos.

In particular, review Figure OS-3 Arroyos.
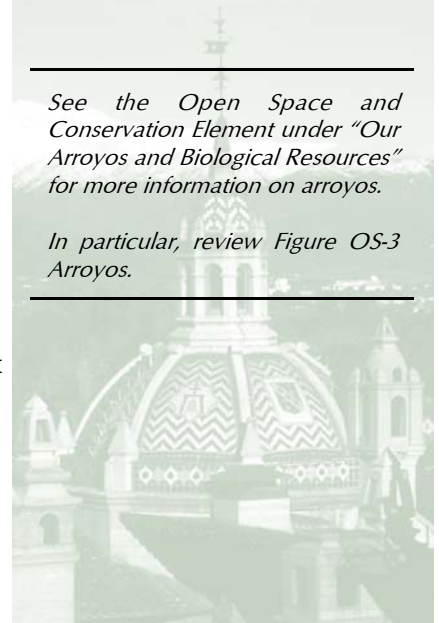
ARLINGTON HEIGHTS & THE GREENBELT

The heart of Riverside's greenbelt is in and around the Arlington Heights neighborhood. Public parts of the greenbelt include the California Citrus State Historic Park and Victoria Avenue, a miles-long scenic drive. The City expects to designate Victoria Avenue as a linear park in 2005. Other portions of the greenbelt consist largely of private lands protected by Proposition R and Measure C, in use as citrus groves, plant nurseries and very-low-density residential development.

PARKWAYS

Many components of Riverside's natural environment exist on and/or define the edges of the City. Several of these components were once connected naturally; prior to urbanization, Riverside's many arroyos provided direct connections to the Santa Ana River. This General Plan provides for greater connections between all of the elements of Riverside Park, including enhanced parkways. Planned parkways include:

❖ **Victoria Avenue:** A historic parkway lined with many species of trees, long recognized as an important local and regional scenic resource and listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The lush landscaping and quiet surroundings make Victoria Avenue feel like a linear park.

❖ **Magnolia Avenue/Market Street:** A seventeen-mile-long historic parkway which was once Riverside's grandest street, this street has the potential to be restored to much of its former stature.

❖ **University Avenue:** This major connector between Downtown, the Eastside neighborhood and UCR will support a symbiotic mix of uses along a visually pleasing road corridor.

❖ **Van Buren Boulevard:** With a dramatic crossing of the Santa Ana River at the City's northern edge and the City's greenbelt at its southern end, Van Buren already provides connections to key elements of Riverside Park.

❖ **Riverwalk Parkway:** Located near La Sierra University, this new drive will provide a water-lined parkway connection between neighborhoods through a portion of the La Sierra community.

❖ **La Sierra Avenue:** Stretching from near the Santa Ana River in the north to the Lake Mathews area in the south, La Sierra Avenue the prime thoroughfare for western Riverside.

❖ **Overlook Parkway:** The connection of the two ends of Overlook across the Alessandro Arroyo poses an opportunity to create a beautiful and dramatic new parkway.

❖ **Canyon Crest Drive:** This lushly landscaped drive traverses rolling, scenic terrain in connecting the Eastside/University/Mission Grove neighborhoods with open space amenities to the south.

❖ **Arlington Avenue:** As a roadway that extends east to west virtually across the entire City, Arlington Avenue provides connections among many neighborhoods and business centers.

RIVERSIDE'S BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Riverside has a distinct built environment consisting of a series of physically and visually connected elements. This framework recognizes two built patterns: corridors and activity centers. Major features of the built environment are shown in Figure LU-34 (Built Environment/Activity Centers).

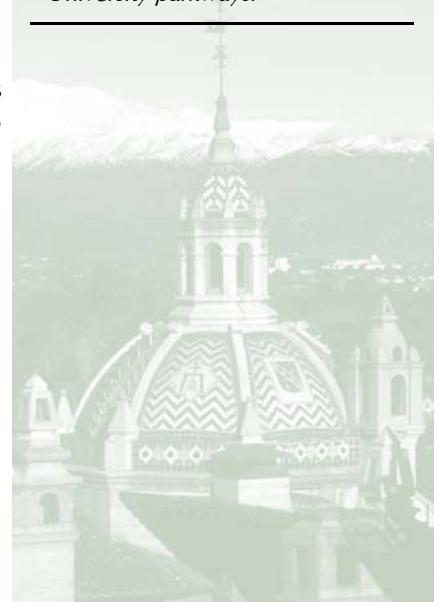## THE MAGNOLIA/MARKET UNIVERSITY "L" CORRIDOR

Magnolia Avenue, Market Street and University Avenue together comprise Riverside's major development corridor, designated as the "L Corridor" to reflect its shape – roughly, an upside-down letter "L". Spanning the entire length of the City, this corridor plays many roles and offers multi-modal transportation options to motorized vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians. The "L" Corridor's length and abundance of current and potential activity centers make it a prime location for advanced forms of public transportation such as express buses and light rail. Along or very close by the "L" Corridor are numerous clusters of intensive development highlighted as Activity Centers. These Activity Centers include:

❖ *Downtown Riverside*

❖ *Major Educational Institutions*
- La Sierra University
- California Baptist University
- Riverside Community College
- University of California, Riverside

❖ *Regional and Citywide Shopping/Mixed Use*
- Galleria at Tyler
- Riverside Plaza

- Riverside Marketplace
- University Village

Figure LU-4 - Built Environment/Activity Centers

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❖ **Local Shopping/Mixed Use Centers**
- Arlington Village
- La Sierra Transit Station
- Brockton Arcade
- Eastside/Park Avenue
- Five Points
- Sears/Hardman Center
- Canyon Crest Town Center
- Van Buren Boulevard
- Mission Grove
- Orangecrest

❖ **Major Employment Centers**
- Downtown Riverside
- Enhanced La Sierra/Gateway Industrial area
- Kaiser Medical Center area
- Magnolia Center (Brockton Arcade/Riverside Plaza)
- Fleetwood Enterprises

❖ **Cultural Villages (For Future Development)**
Retail, cultural or art-based mixed-use which derive signature identity from one or more of Riverside's multiple ethnic groups

❖ **Major Business Parks**
Hunter Business Park, Sycamore Canyon Business Park, Airport Industrial Park, March Air Reserve Base and March Joint Powers Authority (outside of City and Sphere of Influence)

❖ **Riverside Auto Center**

RIVERSIDE'S HISTORIC FABRIC

Riverside has succeeded in retaining its historic characteristics in part through recognition of historic buildings and districts throughout the City. The Urban Design Framework recognizes historic resources that date to many periods of Riverside's history. Major features of the City's historic fabric are shown in Figure LU-45 (Historic Fabric).

Some of the major factors in Riverside's early history as a City are discussed below.

Early Development: Citrus Industry

Riverside's roots extend deep into the citrus industry. The development of the Gage and Riverside Canals, helped the area's burgeoning citrus industry to truly blossom and also permanently shaped Riverside's urban form. Citrus groves fed by the canals formed the basis for the
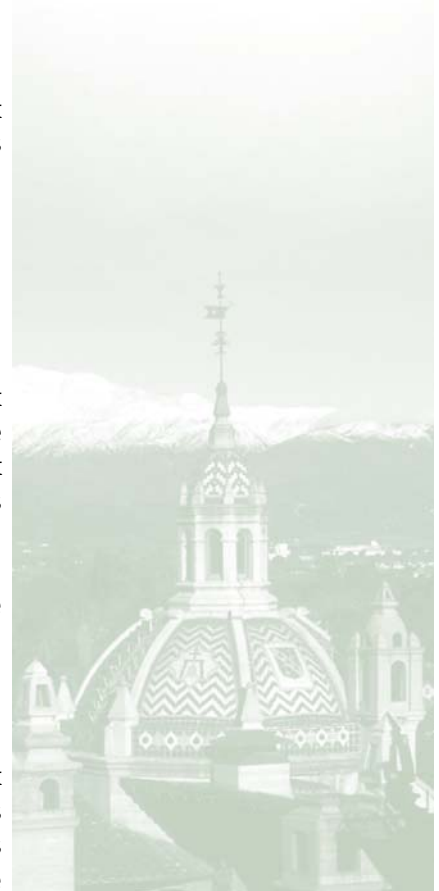
City's greenbelt and influenced the location of streets and land uses in the vicinity.

City Beautiful Movement

Riverside's distinctive grid of streets originating in Downtown was inspired by the early twentieth century's "City Beautiful" movement. The 1893 Columbian Exhibition in Chicago unveiled to the world Daniel Burnham's "White City," espousing classical design elements evocative of ancient Greece and Rome. The initial platting of Riverside, like that of many other California cities, appears to have been influenced by this movement.

"Mile Square"

More detailed platting of central Riverside was a component of the City's original "Mile Square." This area ran from First Street south to Fourteenth Street between Pine Street and Vine Street. The Mile Square Plan helped Riverside to evolve from an agricultural community with potential to a true and functioning city. Within or near the historic Mile Square are numerous facilities and institutions still important today: Fairmount and White Parks (whose designs were crafted by the firm of Frederick Law Olmstead, designer of New York City's Central Park), the Union Pacific and Santa Fe railroad depots and Evergreen Cemetery.

Key Components of Riverside's Historic Fabric

- Santa Ana River watercourse and riverbed
- Gage and Riverside Canals
- Arlington Heights Greenbelt/Victoria Avenue
- Parent Navel Orange Tree
- Downtown/"Mile Square"
- College/University Campuses
- Santa Fe/Union Pacific Railroad Facilities
- Arlington Village
- Magnolia Avenue
- Historic homes throughout the City

CIRCULATION

Riversiders use a variety of transportation modes for travel within and outside of the City. The core of Riverside is built along a modified grid pattern that is easily visible in Downtown, the Eastside, the Wood Streets, Arlington Heights and other neighborhoods. Streets outside

Figure LU-5 - Historic Fabric

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the core have tended to evolve in more circuitous routes reflecting constraints related to City's hilly terrain as well as the predominant schools of thought in 1950s-1990s subdivision design. Figure LU-56 (Tying the Connections) illustrates the key components of Riverside's circulation network; following is a discussion of these components and their implications for land use and urban design. The Circulation Element of the General Plan analyzes the operational aspects of these circulation modes.

Street Network

While only motor vehicles use Riverside's regional freeways (State Routes 91 and 60 and Interstate 215), the City's extensive street network is also shared by pedestrians and bicyclists. Riverside's streets provide connections between neighborhoods, the "L" Corridor and Activity Centers.

Rail Access

Riverside's rail network provides people with greater regional mobility and also serves an important role in the movement of freight. Northern and eastern Riverside features the majority of freight-related lines, while regional Metrolink rail connections run from La Sierra through Downtown and potentially along the east side of the City as the San Jacinto line develops.

Bus Rapid Transit

Much of Riverside's anticipated population and job growth will occur along the "L" Corridor of Magnolia Avenue, Market Street and University Avenue. Opportunities for new mixed-use developments, higher-density residential developments and commercial uses are provided along this already busy corridor. While historically served by several different Riverside Transit Authority (RTA) bus routes, the anticipated level of activity along the "L" Corridor will be sufficient to support more sophisticated bus rapid transit, or BRT.   Utilizing dedicated travel lanes, quicker boarding facilities and synchronization of signal lights, BRT systems have proven to be far more efficient than traditional buses yet much less expensive to implement, operate and maintain than light rail systems. BRT along the "L" Corridor will offer viable alternatives to automotive transit for in-town travel. This plan sets forth a policy to support a BRT system along Magnolia Avenue.

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Figure LU-6 - Tying the Connection

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